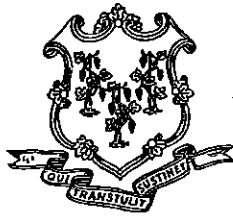


SENATOR ROBERT J. KANE  
DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER  
THIRTY-SECOND DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
SUITE 3400  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591



**State of Connecticut**  
**SENATE**  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-1421  
FAX: (860) 240-8306  
E-MAIL: Rob.Kane@cga.ct.gov  
www.SenatorKane.cga.ct.gov

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Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the honorable Judiciary Committee:

I write to you today to express my support for HB 6489: AN ACT REQUIRING DNA TESTING OF PERSONS ARRESTED FOR THE COMMISSION OF A SERIOUS FELONY.

Our criminal justice system could be best described as a search for the truth. The use of DNA technology is an important tool in that search. This bill would allow for the further development of DNA technology for use in the fight against violent crime.

DNA samples are already collected from convicted felons. This bill expands state law to require that DNA samples be collected from those arrested for any felony. Under this bill, DNA samples would be taken upon arrest from suspects in cases of rape, murder, cyber-stalking, human trafficking, armed robbery, arson, and other crimes.

DNA samples really are the modern-day version of fingerprints. Two dozen other states already have this requirement on their books and it has helped in solving rapes and murders.

It well known that the use of DNA evidence allows for rightful justice to be established when considering the guilt of a defendant. DNA evidence allows prosecutors access to new important tools for identifying criminals.

Right here in our state we have seen DNA evidence used successfully to exonerate the innocent such as the case of James Tillman who served many years in prison for a crime that DNA evidence later proved he did not commit.

Current Connecticut law effective in 2003 states that that any person convicted and sentenced of a crime may, at any time during their incarceration, petition the sentencing court for post-conviction DNA testing. However this bill will ensure that DNA be collected at the time of the crime, alleviating the cause for wrongful conviction and concrete undisputable evidence when presenting the case in court.

There are many examples of how DNA evidence has helped to solve cases that have gone cold. This new law would make it easier to catch repeat offenders, provide more evidence during investigations and present new leads in cases with not much to go on.

(over)

Statistics show that those who commit felonies are likely to have committed other crimes, so more samples in the database earlier can solve crimes more quickly. These samples will build a database that law enforcement can use to quickly identify or rule out a suspect. We need to give our law enforcement officers the most advanced tools that we can.

We need to do everything we can to solve crimes and to solve them quickly so as to prevent future crimes. Our goal is to prevent violent crime from occurring, and this proposal will move us toward that goal. We already have the technology; let's use it to our advantage so that we can identify offenders at the right time.